

## **Addison Business Development Committee**

The Business Development Committee was charged with reviewing issues that involve business development, retention, and attraction; reviewing zoning issues and the possibility of redevelopment in areas of the town; and exploring which national and international relationships are important to our future success.

**Committee Members:** Kimberly Lay, Facilitator; Blake Clemens, Co-Facilitator; Jeannette Consor, Elizabeth Knott, David Markel, Chick Martin, Rex Sedwick, and Lynn Stofer.

### **Process**

The Committee has met regularly since October to identify and discuss issues. These meetings have included presentations from various sources: the Town (Ron Whitehead and Carmen Moran), the Richardson Economic Development coordinator, and the McKinney Economic Development Coordinator. Members of the Committee researched various local issues, such as transportation, entertainment and public relations, and made presentations to the Committee. The Committee toured the Addison Airport and attended an Addison Business Association luncheon.

Members of the Committee as a group visited two major businesses in Addison: Mary Kay and Pizza Hut. Individual members visited and interviewed several small and mid-sized Addison companies. We had the benefit and input at most of the meetings from Council members, Planning and Zoning commissioners, and various Town staff.

In our final sessions, we began listing the most important and recurring issues with no particular order or preference. Finally we categorized the issues in three groups of priorities (high, medium, and low) so that we could follow the critical few issues concept. (*See Attachment A.*)

### **Critical Few Issues Concept**

Addison has a major attribute that is undisputed – if we decide to make something happen, we have demonstrated that we can execute the program flawlessly. To capitalize on that attribute, the Town should concentrate its resources on a few programs and make them happen on a high quality basis. The critical few issues concept insures that the Town will get the maximum benefit from its efforts and expenditures.

### **Top Four Critical Issues**

1. Business/Economic Development Program for business development, retention, and expansion
2. The Cottonbelt Light Rail initiative
3. Communication between Town and Businesses
4. Town Branding

### **Critical Issue #1:**

The Town of Addison needs to know more about what is going on in our business community. The best way to do this is to have an independent focus on this topic, a separate organization which is insulated from public records. The engine to drive a business/economic development program is a superb database coupled with a comprehensive web site. (*See Attachments B & C.*)

#### **Recommendation #1:**

Have the Town Council coordinate with the Addison Business Association (ABA) to create a business/economic development entity with a full-time funded resource. Include funding for this independent organization in the Town's next fiscal year budget. Depending on the ultimate composition of the entity and the agreement with the ABA, this position could be self-funding. Establish a governance protocol for this new entity.

### **Critical Issue #2**

The Cottonbelt light rail initiative is one of the most powerful infrastructure improvement multipliers in existence in Addison today. All parties in Addison (government, businesses, and residents) need to become strong, highly visible supporters of the Cottonbelt.

#### **Recommendation #2**

The Town should have the goal of making this initiative happen in a realistic time frame and should be willing to budget and commit substantial funds to support this effort. Create a line item in the Town's budget to support this initiative and commence strategy and planning efforts as soon as practical. Have the Council and Town staff consolidate, in one location, all of the Town's research and information on past efforts for the Cottonbelt initiative.

With the help of the newly formed Addison business/economic development organization, coordinate programs supporting the initiative with all of the Town's natural partners to this initiative: i.e. Addison businesses, developers, and residents; the University of Texas at Dallas; the cities of Richardson, Carrollton, Farmers Branch, etc.

### **Critical Issue #3**

Effective communication between the Town and Addison businesses, formal and informal, is key to solving problems, developing winning strategies, and facilitating all of the initiatives of the Town.

### **Recommendation #3**

Have the Council and Staff orchestrate monthly luncheons for an exclusive audience. Model this after the McKinney “12 at 12” (a combination of government officials with local leaders in business, real estate, consulting, hospitality, aviation, etc.). Begin this monthly event immediately to experiment with the best format, time, and location.

Use this platform to surface really important issues facing our Town in an off the record format. Ideally, this could become the “go to place” to visit on key Town issues that can be discussed *off the record*.

Utilize the newly formed Addison business/economic development organization to coordinate the activities.

### **Critical Issue #4**

Branding is one of the most important assets that Addison can build on for the future. We are fortunate to have an airport which gets Addison on the local weather news almost every night. Branding is not a science, but rather it is built from key components that merge into a composite image of the Town.

### **Recommendation #4**

Begin to explore institutional advertising (perhaps in partnership with major business entities in Addison), in widely circulated national media.

Engender TV news coverage of Addison events – make it very easy for the media to function in Addison.

Utilize the activities of the business/economic development organization to identify and quantify branding opportunities for Addison.

### **Conclusion**

If Addison can focus on a few “critical issues” over the next five years and execute them flawlessly, the Town will continue to be one of the most favorable places in which to live and do business in the Metroplex.

We believe that there will be many other very important issues for the Town that need time, attention and funding. The business/economic development organization is one key way to let these issues come to the surface.